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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the White House Conference on the Family. The paper discusses many different topics including: purpose of and preparations for the conference, demographic characteristics of delegates, majority recommendations and minority report, issues left unexplored, responsibilities of a consulting sociologist and efforts of interest groups to shape issues to be discussed. An alphabetically arranged list of organizations submitting issues statements is provided with a tabulation as to whether they were successful, unsuccessful or ineffectual, as against issues adopted. Summaries of the final report to the President and of plans for implementation of recommendations are included. Personal observations and conclusions of the author, include the following. There is a need for sociologists to incorporate family policy material in marriage and family and social problems courses. The public is becoming increasingly aware of the impact of government on the family. It is anticipated that the marriage tax and pension and social security for older Americans will be dealt with by the government to eliminate discriminatory regulations. Family impact analysis is identified as a sociological tool which may be oversold. The need to develop the craft and train more people to undertake such research, together with promoting the necessary funding, is stressed. Confidence is expressed in the ultimate capacity of sociology to contribute to family policy dialogue. (Author/RM)

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THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY: SOME OBSERVATIONS.

By

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August 27, 1981

SO 013 635

ABSTRACT OF "THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY: SOME OBSERVATIONS"

For the Family Section Session, "The Family as a Political Issue"

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Reviews preliminary political skirmish prior to finalizing plans for the WHCF and the unique structure ultimately chosen, including three national level meetings in Baltimore, Minneapolis and Los Angeles. Summarizes final report to the President, Congress and the people. Examines demographic characteristics of delegates. Describes preparatory and process involved, with detailed description of what happened in Minnesota. Provides prioritized synopsis of both majority recommendations and minority reports. Topical summaries of plans for implementation of recommendations. Calls attention to issues left unexplored. Responsibilities of a consulting sociologist are described. Efforts of interest groups to shape issues to be discussed are assessed in terms of the ultimate recommendations adopted. An alphabetically arranged list of organizations submitting issues statements is provided, with a tabulation as to whether they were successful, unsuccessful or ineffectual, as against issues adopted. The lack of participation by sociological associations in this process is noted.

Observations and conclusions point to a need for sociologists to incorporate family policy material in marriage and family and social problems courses. It is pointed out that state level outcomes should be monitored. The educational value of the Conferences is acknowledged and the opinion stated that the public is becoming increasingly aware of the impact of government on the family. That the marriage tax and pension and Social Security for older Americans which deter them from marriage will be dealt with by government, to eliminate discriminatory regulations, is anticipated. Family Impact Analysis is identified as a sociological tool we may have oversold. The need to develop the craft and train more people to undertake such research, together with promoting the necessary funding, is stressed. Confidence in the ultimate capacity of the discipline to contribute to family policy dialogue is expressed.

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THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON THE FAMILY:

SOME OBSERVATIONS

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AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Toronto, Canada

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THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON THE FAMILY: SOME OBSERVATIONS

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During his campaign for president, Jimmy Carter indicated his intent to call the first White House Conference on the Family, if elected. Though delayed and changed from the usual structure wherein delegates converge on Washington, D.C., to three national hearings held in Baltimore, Los Angeles and Minneapolis, he did follow through on his campaign promise. The Baltimore meetings were held June 5 - 7, 1980. Minneapolis followed on June 19 - 21, while the Los Angeles sessions were called July 10 - 12.

The inherently political implications of issues touching upon the family system in a pluralistic society contributed to the delay. The sensitive issue of who should be assigned the responsibility for leadership caused problems, with those who labeled themselves "pro family" objecting to Carter's initial appointment of a black female divorcee with teenage children as chair. Asked to accept a co-chair who was a white Catholic male from an intact family, she declined. This was but one of several conflicts that caused delay from the original December, 1979 date until Spring of 1980.

In this paper, materials prepared for delegates and the final report will be summarized and examined. Observations based on the author's involvement in the state-level preparatory meetings in Minnesota and an overall assessment will be shared. What we, as sociologists, might be able to do to contribute to developing public concern about family system issues is treated.

The Report: Listening to America's Families is the report from the hearings to the president, congress and families of the nation. Published in October, 1980, it is available from The White House Conference on Families located at 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20201. In the summary that follows, page references are to The Report.

Statement of Purpose

Highlights from President Carter's directive (5) include two particularly important statements. "When government is helpful to families, let it be strengthened. Where government is harmful to families, let it be changed." And he stated, "Look for creative and compassionate solutions to the problems of families that . . . have been presented . . . and then consider who can best carry out your recommendations, or how those recommendations can be carried out."

From Jim Guy Tucker, chair of the National Advisory Committee, (8) it was explained that President Carter had called the Conference because he felt "a gap had developed in the way government and other major institutions make decisions, that there was no conscious concern for how these decisions help, hurt or ignore families. As a result, we have policies which undermine family stability, programs intended to help families but which hurt them instead . . . ".

These statements revealed a greater awareness of the degree to which the family system is left out of the governmental decision-making process than this sociologist has heard from political leaders, other than Walter Mondale. Instead of blaming the victim, it gave people social permission to examine ways in which our family system has become an unintended target by those making policy and developing programs and services because of the failure to take into account the counterintuitive effects of their planning on families.

Preparation and Participation (11)

Altogether, there were fourteen days of national hearings and 500 forums and conferences at the state and community level. Involved were over 2,000 individuals who spoke at the national hearings. Also, 125,000 people joined in selecting delegates and issues. The Gallup poll tapped attitudes in a comprehensive way. There were 2,000 delegates to the Conferences, 80% of whom were selected by the states. Eventually, 100 representatives from the three Conferences summarized the proposals. "Racial and ethnic minorities were represented at levels greater than their presence in the population." (11)

Representativeness (21)

Sixteen hundred delegates were chosen at the state level. There were 310 appointed at large. Fifty five were state coordinators, and 40 were members of the National Advisory Committee.

Breakdown by various categories revealed the following: (20)

70% were married with children

13% were single parents

60% were female, with 40% male

10% were under 30, while 14% were over 50 years of age

25% came from racial and ethnic minorities with 14% Black, 7.3% Hispanic, 2% Amerindian and 2% Asian American

10% came from families with incomes under $8,000

5% had a handicapping condition

40% were in professional family services while 60% did not earn their living serving families

Reference Materials

Delegates had available to them six reference books. They included the National Organizations Issues Resource Book which contained the issue priorities statements from 133 national organizations. A summary of the fourteen days of national hearings was provided delegates in the National Hearings Summary. Four delegate workbooks had been developed for delegate use, bearing the titles, Families: Challenges and Responsibilities, Families and Human Needs, Families and Major Institutions, and Families and Economic Well-Being.

Commonalities (12)

Despite strong differences, there were several areas of general agreement. These included, (1) Insistence upon increased sensitivity on the part of business and labor to work to reduce the conflict between our responsibilities as parents and employees. Restructuring work, sensitive leave and transfer policies and other family-oriented personnel policies were among widely supported common views. (2) Concern about the impact of drug and alcohol abuse on families constituted a principal area of agreement. (3) Changes in Social Security and health policies to encourage care of the elderly and disabled within the family system were supported. (4) Opposition to the "marriage tax" was virtually universally expressed. (5) Opposition to over-emphasis on sex, violence and stereotypes as portrayed by the media was expressed. (6) The delegates called for action to diminish and deal with domestic violence and adolescent pregnancy.

Contrary to pre-conference fears, "No organized interest was able to dominate the Conferences". (12)

Outcomes

Some of the most visible outcomes include the following:

(1) Action is being proposed to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

(2) Increasing media coverage of family issues. (Note: The Family Weekly Sunday newspaper supplement is funneling research reports into the public mainstream by giving fairly regular synopses of articles from the new Journal of Family Issues.)

(3) There is growing interest on the part of the business community and labor movement in terms of family-oriented personnel policies.

(4) Some of the participating states are committed to engaging in implementing recommendations which came out at their preparatory meetings. (e.g. Minnesota)

Prioritized Recommendations: A Synopsis (18, 19)

The following are the top recommendations at all three Conferences, by percentage of "yes" votes: (let % = percentage)

1. A call for family-oriented policies such as flextime, leave policies, shared and part-time jobs, and transfer policies. (92.7%)
2. Increased efforts to prevent alcohol and drug abuse education and media initiatives. (92.7%)
3. Major changes in the tax code to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, revise inheritance taxes and recognize homemakers. (92.1%)
4. Tax policies to encourage home care of aging and handicapped persons. (92%)
5. Greater assistance to families with a handicapped member by means of tax credits, financial help, etc. (91%)
6. A call for systematic analysis of all laws, regulations and rules for their impact on families. (90.4%)
7. Efforts to increase public awareness and sensitivity towards persons with handicapping conditions. (90.1%)
8. Government efforts to assist handicapped persons, including enforcing existing laws. (89.8%)
9. Encourage independence and home care for aging persons by means of tax incentives, housing programs, etc. (89%)
10. More equitable economic treatment of full-time homemakers, suggesting changes in Social Security provisions, programs for displaced homemakers. (87.4%)
11. Reform of Social Security, toward eliminating biases against families, marriage, and homemakers. (84.9%)

12. Increased pressure on the media to curb excess violence, sex, and stereotypes. (83.4%)
13. Increased efforts to combat employment discrimination. (83%)
14. Support for family violence prevention efforts and services. (82%)
15. Involvement of families in improved family support services and self-help efforts. (81.5%)
16. Support for full employment, implementing the Humphrey-Hawkins Act and through job creation efforts. (81.5%)
17. Development of a coherent energy and inflation policy. (79.4%)
18. Promote and support a variety of child care choices including the home, community and center based care, with parental choice. (78.3%)
19. Improved tax incentives for family housing. (78.3%)
20. Increased efforts to prevent and deal with adolescent pregnancy. (77.9%)

Recommendation-Developing Process (21-22)

At each of the three locations, three groups of delegate workgroups involving 30-40 people examined recommendations coming out of the national hearings, the state meetings, national organization recommendations, the Gallup Survey results, and their own internal resources and experience. Topic sessions were held involving 125-175 persons, and plenary meetings of the entire conference were held.

Assignment to small groups was done on the basis of expressed preference. Each group was responsible for developing three recommendations in a specific area under one of four topic umbrellas. The top three recommendations were selected by written ballot from among those receiving a majority vote.

The topic sessions then reviewed and voted on recommendations from each of the workgroups in their area, with equal time for each workgroup. After considering the recommendations, amendments were considered. From here, each of the four topic groups sent a maximum of three recommendations from each workgroup to the plenary session.

The voting plenary was the final stage of the process, with time equally divided between the four topics. Speakers for and against recommendations were selected at random. Delegates voted by written ballot indicating degree of agreement or disagreement, using a four point scale. There were 166 recommendations coming from the Topic Sessions which were approved in the plenary sessions. Nine were defeated by vote of the Conference.

Issues and Recommendations (23)

Topic	Recommendation(s)
Economic Pressures (42, 45)	1. Changes in Social Security to provide survivor benefits regardless of age and children, to provide credit for time taken off employment for child rearing, nondiscriminatory eligibility requirements, vesting in private pension plans, widow benefits at age 55, relaxed disability requirements, payments to children receiving VA benefits, equitable allowances for discrepancies in life expectancy, and social security benefits in one's own name rather than as a dependent.
	2. Changes in AFDC to eliminate the disincentive to a father remaining in a household.
	3. Concern for the status of homemakers, recommending elimination of state and federal inheritance taxes for spouses, allowing tax credits for homemakers providing primary care for handicapped and elderly in the home.
Family and Work (31)	1. Offer creative work arrangements such as flextime, job sharing, flexible leave for both sexes, part-time jobs with prorated pay and benefits, and dependent care options.
Tax Policies (33)	1. Eliminate marriage tax, provide tax incentives for home care of elderly or disabled, and eliminate inheritance taxes on estates under one million when inherited by spouse or children.
	2. Provide tax deductions for family savings, child care and care for elderly.
	3. Incentives for businesses sponsoring child care services and increased child care tax credits for working parents, to 35%.
Preparation for Marriage and Family Life (48)	1. Family life education that includes human development, marriage and the family, parenting education and child care skills, material on interpersonal relationships like communication and decision-making, and human sexuality.
	2. Training and certification for course leaders.

Topic	Recommendation(s)
Specific Supports for Families (53)	1. Link federal efforts to community based and volunteer organizations.
	2. Increase use of volunteers and family self-help programs.
	3. Increase scope of services to include the whole family.
Parents and Children (55)	1. Focus on prevention of adolescent pregnancy.
	2. Ready access to comprehensive health, education and social services for male and female adolescents and their families.
Family Violence (59)	1. Call for government leadership in understanding the causes of family violence and in enacting legislation and developing programs to alleviate and prevent it.
	2. Need for expanded educational campaigns to heighten public awareness of the problem.
	3. Develop rehabilitation services for victims and perpetrators.
Substance Abuse (62)	1. Develop preventive educational programs on substance abuse.
	2. Involve whole family in community-based treatment.
	3. Obtain media cooperation to focus on harmful effects of substance abuse.
Aging and Families (66)	1. Recognize individuality, allowing a broad range of living arrangements.
	2. Provide support to continue living in own home or with adult children.
	3. Tax incentives to help families with elderly members.
	4. Changes in Social Security to aid elderly.
Education (71)	1. Priority attention to family life education, with home and school working together.
Health (73)	1. Health care delivery should focus on prevention.
	2. Baltimore and Los Angeles called for a full range of family planning services to all persons.

Topic		Recommendation(s)
Housing	(76)	1. Call for affordable housing for families and an end to discrimination. Use tax incentives, subsidies and reduced interest rates to achieve it.
		2. Outlaw discrimination against families with children.
Child Care	(80)	1. Need alternative forms of quality child care, full parental choice, and expanded funding.
Handicapping Conditions	(83)	1. Use of media, education, training and counseling to promote positive attitudes.
		2. Encourage independence of handicapped.
		3. Tax incentives for families caring for handicapped.
		4. Financial assistance to purchase equipment for handicapped.
		5. Promote employment opportunities for handicapped.
Government	(87)	1. Analyze impact of laws and regulations on families.
		2. Require family impact statements of private and public agencies.
		3. Advocated passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
Media	(92)	1. Less emphasis on violence, pornography, crime, stereotypes, drugs and alcohol.
		2. Advocated community consultation with media to deal with #1.
Community Institutions	(96)	1. Called for greater involvement of community groups and religious organizations in providing services to assist families.
		2. Recognized importance of such organizations
Law and the Judicial System	(100)	1. Called for greater use of conciliation and mediation services in family disputes.
		2. Increase efforts to avoid out-of-home child placement.

Minority Reports

Minority reports required support from only 50 delegates. There were 23 from Baltimore, 32 from Minneapolis, and 35 from Los Angeles. Twelve dealt with

concerns of Hispanic, Black, native American and Asian constituencies, (110) including requiring adequate representation of minorities in decision-making and the need to recognize cultural diversity.

Seven minority reports advocated a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion and an end to government-funded abortion.

Six stressed the need for sex education at home and greater parental involvement in sex education efforts.

Youth delegates opposed a draft, supported the ERA, and called for planned parenthood services to young people without parental consent.

Five such reports dealt with the need for comprehensive health care, with particular concern for rural populations and an emphasis on preventive health care.

To the several general recommendations dealing with handicapping conditions were added minority report calls for additional discussion about such issues, support for self-help groups and career education and advocacy on handicapping issues.

A single report called for tax assistance for non-public schools.

Three minority reports called for a definition of the family as consisting of "two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption".

Three Gay rights reports urged an end to discrimination against homosexuals.

Two reports advocated more media regulation while another expressed opposition to such control.

Three reports advocated making child care available through incentives and/or tax benefits.

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As is clear when one reviews those recommendations which passed as compared with the minority reports, not passed, the pre-Conference fear that radical right or left groups would dominate the scene simply was not born out. Those proposals clearly identified with special interest groups did not sway the predominantly centrist tone of the sessions.

Implementation (120)

Planning for implementation began with the initial meeting of the National Advisory Committee, at which point six months of post-Conference activities were budgeted into the costs. Knowing that six months would not be sufficient

time, effort was made to build expressed concern into the agendas of established organizations so that they might sustain the momentum through the decade. Elected representatives were urged to continue following through on recommendations and to call for periodic (at least annual) reports on progress made in implementing proposed changes.

Last October, top business executives met at the White House for a briefing on Conference recommendations impacting on the workforce, including those having to do with flextime, leave policies and child care. It was recognized that to maintain any kind of thrust, constituencies must be mobilized to sustain further progress.

Absent Issues

Some of the issues that were conspicuous by their absence included: (1) How to structure on-going concern for family systems into government while minimizing the risks inherent in such a move. (2) The dearth of people trained to do the family impact analysis being advocated. (3) How to tap grass roots experience with government-generated programs and policies to identify harmful rules and regulations. (4) The need to fund research on families, especially those involving longitudinal studies. (5) The need to fund training for specialists in Family Impact Analysis.

Uneven Level of State Participation

Some states responded wholeheartedly, like Minnesota. Others were comparatively half-hearted, like Illinois. Two actively opted out of the process, like Alabama. The fact that national directives to organize were not accompanied by financial support from the federal government resulted in an unbudgeted expense for the states.

The Minnesota Scene

In Minnesota, the State Planning Agency appealed to corporate friends for contributions. Such companies as the Pillsbury Company, General Mills and Daytons had a sustained record of interest in family concerns. However, when the initial hearings turned into political hot potatoes, the private funding sources dried up. They were fearful their offices might become targets for confrontations between "Pro Choice" versus "Right to Life" forces. This consulting sociologist wound up with one-tenth her agreed upon fee as a direct consequence of the politization which occurred in the open hearing. I suspect that my experience was not unique.

Governor Quie assigned responsibility to respond to the federal directive to prepare for the Conference to the head of the Minnesota State Planning Agency, Dean Honetschlager. In turn, he invited selected leaders to participate in the steering committee to initiate planning. They advised approaching the

Family Study Center to obtain a consulting sociologist specializing in family to work with them. Chair Robert K. Leik recommended me, having authored an invited position paper on public policy and the family for the Carter administration.

Preliminary conversation centered around the Governor's effort to control the composition of an advisory committee, dominate the delegate selection process and to restrict debate about government and the family. It seemed that the Governor intended to select two-thirds of the delegates. He had decided that "only those groups which had an historic interest in the family" should be given representation on the advisory committee. Since it was his feeling that there had already been ample discussion of the affect of government on the family, Minnesota discussion would, instead, deal with the impact of the private sector on the family.

Among the groups to be kept out of the advisory committee process, he had identified Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters, and the National Organization for Women, ostensibly because they were disinterested in the family.

The fact that federal guidelines prohibited gubernatorial selection of more than 1/3 of the delegates was, apparently, to be disregarded. The fact that the three groups to be precluded from participation supported "Pro Choice" positions with respect to abortion and that he had been elected on a "Right to Life" platform was clearly no coincidence. How he intended to police "open" hearings to prevent discussion of how governmental rules and regulations, programs and services were harming families was never made clear.

Whether because of pressure from the federal level, networking within the State or a combination of these forces, the Governor abandoned his effort to manipulate the Minnesota Conference activities. Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters and the Women's Center were all represented on the advisory committee. The Governor wound up appointing the suggested proportion of delegates. Too, the open hearings included considerable discussion of the relations between government and family systems.

Role of the Consultant

Preparatory to holding the first meeting of the broad-based advisory committee, a background paper on family issues was prepared and distributed. In accompaniment, a demographic report on all of the states in the region was developed. The consultant was to participate in the steering committee meetings, the advisory committee meetings and some of the regional hearings.

Prior to the open hearings in seven cities, instruments to be used to tabulate verbal testimony given and to obtain opinions of those attending the hearings were prepared. The consultant (unsuccessfully) critiqued the instruments.

The consultant assisted in tabulating and coding responses from some of the regional hearings, as recorded on the above-mentioned instruments.

The consultant also acted as a resource person on family issues for the Minnesota delegate workshops as they developed position statements and made recommendations to be sent to Washington, D. C.

After the regional hearings were held, 1/3 of the delegates had been directly elected and another election was held among the members of the advisory committee to elect another 1/3. The Governor then appointed the final 1/3, attempting to take into account representation from minority groups, age range and special condition.

Delegate Confrontation

Coming together to attempt to hammer out topics, positions and recommendations for programs, the Minnesota delegates spent 2 1/2 days at Spring Valley Conference Center, an ideal facility for such meetings. There was tension between those who had been elected at the regional hearings, largely dominated by organized right wing factions, and those elected by the advisory committee, peopled largely by professional persons working in human and educational services. The peer elected regional delegates saw themselves as being the only "truly representative" delegates. This tension was particularly manifest during final discussion of issues and proposed programs to be sent to Washington, D. C. In large measure, the advisory committee delegates were highly educated, and general mistrust of "egg heads" exacerbated the ideological distance between the two factions. Repeatedly, the schism was reflected in voting on issues dear to the hearts of those calling themselves "Pro Family". Usually, that faction lost by a very narrow margin on their most controversial positions. The delegates elected from the regions even attempted to unseat advisory committee delegates and deny them their right to vote.

The tenor of some of the discussion of issues is reflected in arguments over semantics. A right wing delegate from Rochester protested using either the word "lifestyle" or "holistic". These words, according to the radical right literature brought to the meetings by some non-participating observers, are "communist inspired".

Overall, a great deal of patient, careful planning on the part of the steering committee, State Planning Agency staff and the advisory committee paid off. Catching a whiff of the political ether and observing the democratic process in action were good antidotes to intellectualism for this Ivory Tower academician.

Interest Groups Influence Issues: Their Success and Failure

There were 133 interest groups which submitted a one or two page synopsis of their positions published as the Issues Resources Book. In some cases, issues statements came from an executive of an organization or from the results of membership polls to establish their priorities. Others, like the National Council on Family Relations, established a special committee or task force

to develop key position papers. NCFR developed a set of papers dealing with such topics as health, day care, domestic violence, care of elderly or handicapped members, and government and the family. The intent was to contribute to informed consideration by the Conferences of as many critical issues as possible.

To attempt to assess the impact of these statements on the final recommendations, or at least the degree to which positions taken by these groups were supported in the Conferences, I reviewed the issues statements against the final recommendations in terms of how many advocated positions had been successful, unsuccessful, or ineffectually promoted. The results are contained in the following alphabetically arranged list of organizations.

Organization	# Successfully Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
Action for Children's Television	1	1	
Adult Ed. Assn. of U.S.A.		1	
American Academy of Child Psychiatry		1	
Am. Academy of Pediatrics	2	3	
Am. Agri-Women		1	
Am. Art Therapy Assn.		3	
Am. Assn. of Homes for Aging	1	1	
Am. Assn. for School Administrators			1
Am. Assn. of Univ. Women	4		
American Bar Assn.	2	1	
American Conservative Union	2	25	
Am. Correctional Assn.	4	3	1
Am. Council for Nationalities Service	1	1	
Am. Dental Assn.		5	
Am. Dietetic Assn.	1	6	
Am. Family Communiversity		3	
Am. Farm Bureau Fed.	1	3	2
Am. F of L & CIO	7	20	
Am. Home Ec. Assn.	3	2	1

Organization	# Successfuly Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
Am. Life Lobby, Inc.		3	
Am. Nurses Assn., Inc.		3	
Am. Optometric Assn.		4	
Am. Orthopsychiatric Assn.	4	1	
Am. Personnel & Guidance Assn.		1	
Am. Psych. Assn.	3	2	
Am. Red Cross	2	14	
Am. Society for Public Admn.		1	
Americans for Democratic Action	1	4	
Am. Women's Clergy Assn.		1	
Am. for Family & Freedom	1	6	
Assn. for Handicapped Citizens of Puerto Rico	2	3	
Assn. for Care of Children in Hospitals	2	5	
Assn. of Couples for Marriage Enrichment, Inc.		3	
Assn. of Family Conciliation Courts	3	6	
Assn. of Junior Leagues, Inc.	1	2	
Birthright, Inc.		3	
B'nai B'rith, Int.			1
Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church	3	1	
Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church	4	1	
Boy Scouts of Am.			1
Boys Clubs of Am.	4	2	
Catholic Parents Coalition		5	
Catholics United for the Faith, Inc.		3	
Child Welfare League	2	4	
Children's Foundation	1	4	
Church Women United	6	3	

Organization	# Successfully Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
Conn. Assn. for Marriage and Family Therapy, Inc.	2		3
Continuing Committee of the National Women's Conf.	5	5	
Couple to Couple League		3	
Day Care and Child Dev. Council of Am., Inc.	1		
Eagle Forum, Inc.	1	3	3
Epilepsy Foundation of Am.		5	
ERAmerica	1		
Family Concern, Inc.	2	5	
Family Impact Seminar	2	3	
Family Life Committee, Gen. Conf., Mennonite Church	3	4	
Fam. Serv. Assn. of Am.	9	5	
Farmers Union	2	4	
4-H		3	
Future Homemakers of Am.	5	4	
Girl Scouts	1	1	
Girls Clubs of Am., Inc.	2	4	
HEW Coalition	3	6	2
Home and School Institute, Inc.		1	
Human Life and Natural Family Planning Foundation		5	
Ill. Citizens for Life		4	
Int. Assn. of Parents of the Deaf, Inc.		1	
Int. Fed. for Genetic Research, The Michael Fund		3	
Institute for Urban Affairs and Research	2	9	
League of United Latin American Citizens	5	2	1
League of Women Voters of United States	3	1	1
Lithuanian-American Community of U.S.A., Inc.	3	4	1

Organization	# Successfully Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
Lutheran Church in Am.	7	11	2
MEN of U.S.A., Inc.	1	6	
Mental Health Assn.	2	5	1
Nat'l Alliance for Fam. Life, Inc.	4	3	
Nat'l Alliance for Fam. Life through Christian Fem. Renewal		5	1
Nat'l Alliance for Optional Parenthood	2	2	
Nat'l Assn. of Pro-Am.		11	
Nat'l Assn. of Rehab. Facilities	2		
Nat'l Assn. of Social Workers, Inc.	2	3	
Nat'l Coalition of Hispanic Mental Health and Human Services Org.	1	7	
Nat'l Council of Y.M.C.A.'s of U.S.A.	3	2	
Nat'l Board of Y.W.C.A. of U.S.	7	5	
Nat'l Catholic Ed. Assn.		1	1
Nat'l Catholic Rural Life Conf.	2	4	
Nat'l Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform	1	2	
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	2		
Nat'l Comm. for Citizens in Ed.	1	2	
Nat'l Community Action Agency, Exec. Dir. Assn.	1	5	2
Nat'l Conf. of Catholic Charities	3	3	1
Nat'l Conf. on Social Workers	6	11	
Nat'l Council for Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services, Inc.	2	1	
Nat'l Council of Administrators of Home Ec.	2	1	1
Nat'l Council of Catholic Women	2	4	
Nat'l Council of Jewish Women	7	5	1
Nat'l Council of Churches of Christ, U.S.A.	1	1	

Organization	# Successfully Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
Nat'l Council of Women	3	2	
Nat'l Council on Alcoholism	1		
Nat'l Council of Family Relations	7	3	
Nat'l Easter Seal Society	6	3	
Nat'l Educational Assn.	2	1	
Nat'l Extension Homemakers Council, Inc.	1	3	
Nat'l District Atty. Assn.	2	1	2
Nat'l Forum of Catholic Parent Organizations		1	
Nat'l Grange			1
Nat'l League for Nursing	1	3	2
Nat'l League of Cities	1	2	2
Nat'l Legal Aid & Defender Assn.	3	2	
Nat'l Military Wives Assn., Inc.	1	5	
Nat'l Optometric Assn.		4	
Nat'l P T A	3	1	1
Nat'l Pro-Family Coalition on the White House Conference on Fam.	2	6	
Nat'l Rehab. Counseling Assn.	2	2	
Nat'l Rural Electric Coop Assn.		3	
Nat'l Assn. of The Am. College of Obstetrician & Gynecologists	4	3	
Pacific/Asian Assn.	1	3	
Parents Without Partners, Inc.	1	4	
Planned Parenthood - World Pop.	2	3	
Spina Bifida Assn. of Am.	2	2	
Stepfamily Assn. of Am., Inc.	1		
Teenage Assembly of Am., Inc.	1	1	
Unitarian Universalist Women's Fed.	3	1	
United Church: Board for Homeland Ministries	5		
United Parents of Am.		5	
U.S. Catholic Conf.	2	3	

Organization	# Successfully Promoted	# Unsuccessfully Promoted	# Ineffectually Promoted
U. S. Coalition for Life		6	
U. of Ky. Coop. Extension Serv.		4	
Women's Action Alliance, Inc.	1		
Working Women, Nat'l Assn. of Office Workers	5		
Young Am. for Freedom	1	2	

How much issues statements from organizations actually influenced delegates is unknown. How many of these organizations had members who were delegates, thereby increasing the likelihood that their positions would be considered, is also unknown. As a sociologist, I found it significant that there was no professional sociological organization contributing to the dialogue or attempting to express a sense of priorities about the issues. The closest sociologists might have come was through their membership in such groups as the National Council on Family Relations or the Family Impact Seminar, both submitting contributions to the Issues Resource Book.

To assess the relative strength of the "radical right", it is instructive to look at the "win-loss" record as revealed in their successes and failures of organization proposals, and in terms of the number of votes the final minority reports received. Nine resolutions which were commonly associated with the right received a total of 697 votes, for an average of 76.88 per report. In contrast, special interest resolutions numbered ten, commanded a total of 682 votes, for an average of 68.2 votes apiece. The balance of minority report resolutions were centrist in nature, numbered four, captured 292 votes, for an average of 73. These resolutions were simply felt to be redundant and/or lacking priority as compared with other recommendations.

Observations and Conclusions

1. To maintain the momentum of the White House Conference on Families, I feel it is important for those of us teaching Marriage & Family and social problems courses to incorporate material relating to family social policy issues in those classes. There is no coverage of such material in the Minnesota Inventory. There is none in any text on marriage and the family that I have seen, even those published this year.

2. I think it is important that we be alert to the possibility that less visible outcomes of the Conference may occur at the state level. The advisory committee in Minnesota was instructed from its inception to prepare for long-range involvement in implementing recommendations which applied to that area and were made manifest in the regional hearings. What, if anything, has evolved, I have not heard. The National Advisory Committee urged each of the state coordinators to continue working toward implementation at the state and national levels.

3. While the current political and economic climate in the United States does not seem compatible with the hope that the federal government will maintain the initiative in achieving the WHCF goals, important first steps have been taken. The base of knowledgeable concern has been broadened. The ideological rout by the radical right did not occur. Rather, a centrist to moderately liberal stance prevailed.

4. There is a more sophisticated public awareness of the fact that policies and practices emanating from government have enormous impact on the family system. Society seems to have lost its innocence in the sense that we now know that abdicating representation of the family system in the decision-making process doesn't contribute to family autonomy. It makes a sitting duck of the family system.

5. Like most White House Conferences, this one was primarily educational in nature. But the beginning of an effective polity is an educated one.

6. I expect the marriage tax will soon be eliminated. This was one of those issues on which almost everyone agreed.

7. Given the activist nature of the lobbiests representing older Americans, I expect current pension and Social Security regulations may be altered to enable older couples to marry without economic penalty. Furthermore, the cost-benefit good sense of changing the tax burden for families caring for elderly or handicapped members will probably be undertaken, as recommended.

8. Unreasonable popular expectations about the utility of family impact analysis may cause problems. No mention was made of funding training for people in this new craft. If we were suddenly confronted with the challenge to examine all past and pending policies, programs and services in terms of how each impacts on the family system, we'd be unable to do it. We must take care, as a discipline, not to advocate this new process as if it was a snakeoil cure.

9. I believe sociology as a discipline can make significant contributions to the development of family policy, and I view it a part of our professional responsibility to become involved in that process.